



AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB, Texas



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Sparks fly over flyover at MLK march

Web Posted: 01/13/2006 12:00 AM CST

Lisa Marie Gómez
Express-News Staff Writer

A bitter dispute over the planned military flyover at Monday's Martin Luther King march has split peace activists, longtime march supporters and East Side community members, and could result in a smaller turnout for what has been the nation's largest MLK march.

Some opponents of the flyover are calling for a boycott of the march, while others plan to attend with bandanas over their mouths and black and yellow ribbons around their arms in a show of protest.

Two fighter jets from the 99th Flying Training Squadron at Randolph AFB will zoom over Pittman-Sullivan Park at noon at the end of the nearly three-mile march from Martin Luther King Drive to Iowa Street.

While some say the flyover will provide a patriotic flair to the march during a time of war, others say it will represent support for the war — something King would not approve of.

The Rev. Herman Price, chairman of the city's MLK Commission, said the flyover was meant to honor King, and he is dismayed by the divisiveness it has caused.

"It all depends on how you look at it," Price said Thursday. "They say the planes represent war and bombs and death, but at the same time those planes can also represent our freedom and peace."

But City Councilwoman Patti Radle, who objected to the flyover in a letter to the editor in Wednesday's Express-News, doesn't see it that way.

"War is a different system working for peace. Martin Luther King was not part of that system," she said.

City Councilwoman Sheila McNeil, whose district includes the march route, contented the flyover is exactly what King would have wanted.

"I think that the military plays too significant of a role in our community for us to ignore them and not include them in this march," she said. "They are the reason why we have peace, and this is MLK's peace march."

The dispute has been brewing since November, when someone brought up the idea for a flyover at an MLK Commission meeting. Commissioners voted for a motion to add the flyover, though it's unclear whether the issue was placed on the agenda.

As word of the flyover spread throughout the community, some peace activists became upset and banded together through e-mails and meetings.

Many opponents of the flyover, including Radle, said they might skip the event.

A flier distributed at City Hall on Thursday urged people to boycott the march.

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"San Antonio's MLK march, one of the largest in the nation, is absolutely the wrong event for a military flyover," P.C. McKinnon wrote in an e-mail to the Express-News. "Would it have been appropriate to have a flyover at Dr. King's funeral? I think not."

McKinnon said he won't take his family to the march.

Tommy Calvert Jr., an East Side activist, said when he tried to rescind the flyover decision at an MLK commission meeting Monday, Price would not allow it.

"I think I'm going to wear a gag bandana in my mouth since I was not allowed to call a vote on the floor in solidarity with the dozens of people who were there to overturn the vote," Calvert said. "If you're going to honor Dr. King, you have to honor the nonviolent point. It's fundamental."

He added that no one in the peace movement wants to keep the military from marching.

"But a fighter jet is not a soldier," he said. "Dr. King said that you lay down your arms at the table of brotherhood. A fighter jet is an arm."

Jane Tuck, who attended the meeting with Calvert, said she told the group the flyover would be antithetical to the beliefs of King and his work.

Others joined in, and the meeting soon turned sour.

"It got to be a very ugly meeting," said Tuck, a member of a pacifist organization.



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Kelly's agency gets new name: Port Authority

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Greg Jefferson

Express-News Staff Writer

The Greater Kelly Development Authority, like the Air Force base it was charged with redeveloping, is history.

The City Council on Thursday unanimously approved recasting the entity as the Port Authority of San Antonio — a gesture reflecting the drive to direct more international distribution business through the industrial park.

The management authority's name change is effective immediately. The name KellyUSA, the industrial park it oversees, will be changed later. One possibility: the Port of San Antonio at Kelly.

The redevelopment agency has the authority to own, lease and operate port facilities for air, trucking and rail transportation, giving it the makings of an inland port. But the name "Kelly" doesn't help sell the former military installation to foreign companies and governments, said board Chairman Arthur Rojas Emerson.

"When we bring up Kelly, it's not exactly a name that's well-established," he said.

Councilman Richard Perez, whose Southwest Side district encompasses KellyUSA, agreed with the change. While most overseas firms understand what a port authority is, he said, very few know what the Greater Kelly Development Authority stands for.

"We're trying to be a port for (entities) outside of San Antonio, outside of Texas, outside of the country," Councilman Roger Flores added.

The name Kelly clearly is being downplayed, but Emerson told council members it's not going away. The industrial park's Kelly Field, Kelly Aviation Center and its burgeoning Kelly Towne Center won't lose their names.

"Kelly will always be Kelly," Emerson said. "The Kelly name must be sustained."

He was reassuring Councilwoman Elena Guajardo, who worried about the loss of part of the city's identity.

Kelly AFB, which closed in 2001, spawned thousands of civilian jobs and decades ago helped forge San Antonio's Hispanic middle class.

"To lose that recognition I think is very dangerous," Guajardo said.

But in the end she got enough assurance that the name wouldn't disappear that she voted for the measure.

The GKDA was created in 1999 as the successor to Greater Kelly Development Corp. But under either name, its task was to draw private industry and jobs to the installation.

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Puppy love for your country

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Scott Huddleston
Express-News Staff Writer

The house was quiet after both family pets, golden retrievers, died six months apart.

Then, two months after the second one's death, Dr. George Wolf, his wife and two teenage children had a puppy at home, although it was just visiting.

"It definitely helped emotionally" after losing their canine companions, Wolf said.

Since then, the Wolfs have been in perpetual puppyhood, raising Belgian Malinois pups for Uncle Sam.

They signed up for the Department of Defense Military Working Dog Breeding Program when it began in 2000, and have raised five pups that have become military working dogs.

Next month, they'll get a sixth puppy, to be treated much like a pet, then trained at Lackland AFB. Once trained, the dogs are sent to U.S. bases around the world.

Some are placed in U.S. Customs or Border Patrol service, or sent to other law enforcement agencies.

Because of a high demand for bomb-sniffing dogs, Lackland needs volunteers to care for at least 20 new pups.

Fellow, the first dog the Wolfs raised, flunked his training — he was a late bloomer in the aggression category — and was adopted as their pet. The other four pups made good. One is a San Francisco police dog. The other, because of her keen sense of smell, is used for breeding.

"It's very gratifying," Wolf said. "You're helping the military, and society."

Aside from having to take the pups to Lackland for brief visits twice a month, there is no cost to volunteers. The program supplies food, veterinary care and even dog chews.

During the visits, volunteers can watch base personnel work with the pups, said Lacy Smith, program manager.

"I play with them, make sure they're well-rounded and healthy, and not gaining too much weight," she said.

Because the dogs train for various tasks: patrol, protection and drug and explosives detection, they need exposure to different noises, people and animals. A family home is the best place for a pup that may someday work in all kinds of situations, Smith said.

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"Worldwide events have definitely increased the need for explosive-detection dogs," she said.

About 60 pups from the program are now working, and 140 are in training. Pups are handed over to volunteers at about 9 weeks old, then returned seven to nine months later, when they undergo a year of training at Lackland.

Kay Heihn, who also has two companion dogs, has raised military pups for four years. When one of them completes training, it's as if one of her children has graduated from college, she said.

"It's phenomenal, knowing that you have a hand in raising a dog that has the potential to save lives," Heihn said.

Her favorite, Ori, is training at Lackland, and has mated with two females. Even as a pup, Ori was house-trained.

Soon, Heihn will get to take home her eighth pup, one of Ori's offspring, she said.

"I've been telling everyone that I'm a grandmother."

Anyone interested in volunteering can call (210) 671-3686 or e-mail lacy.smith@lackland.af.mil.



John Davenport/Express-News

A couple of Belgian Malinois puppies chew on Lacy Smith's jeans at Lackland AFB. Smith, manager of the puppy program, will be arranging for the puppies there to be placed with families until they can return to the base for career training in patrolling and sniffing out drugs and bombs.



India, a Belgian Malinois, leaps to catch a ball for Lacy Smith as India's puppies toddle around at Lackland. When they're about 9 weeks old, the puppies are temporarily placed with families and live with them seven to nine months.

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